

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested in light of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-14, 17, 19-21, 25, 29, and 31 have been canceled in favor of new claims 32-49. Support for the subject matter of the new claims is provided for example in Figs. 3-5, and 7, the original claims, and the specification on page 3, lines 3-18, page 25, lines 3-23, page 30, line 18, through page 31, line 5, page 38, lines 5-15, page 38, line 23, through page 39, line 8, and page 40, line 9, through page 43, line 25. The claims have been drafted to avoid the issues underlying the 35 USC 112, second paragraph, rejections applied to claims 11 and 12.

Claims 1, 2, 7-10, 13, and 14 were rejected, under 35 USC § 102(b), as being anticipated by Haartsen (US 2002/0126692). Claims 3-6, 11, 12, 17, 19-21, 25, 29, and 31 were rejected, under 35 USC § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Haartsen in view of Montano et al. (US 7,280,518). To the extent that these rejections may be deemed applicable to new claims 32-49, the Applicants respectfully traverse as follows.

Claim 32 defines a radio communication method for a radio communication system having a plurality of radio communication devices that are each able to accommodate and manage a radio communication terminal. According to this method, a communication period is divided into a plurality of time slots in accordance with the number of radio communication devices detected by one of the plurality of radio communication devices. The one radio communication device uses a first time slot for high priority communication, and another radio communication device may use a second time slot for high priority communication. The claimed

subject matter supports avoiding signal collisions in a wireless medium (see specification page 3, lines 15-19).

Haartsen discloses allocating time slots to communication units. More specifically, Haartsen discloses that one of a plurality of communication units acts as a master communication unit and assigns a time slot on a wireless medium by transmitting a pseudo-token to a slave communication unit. The master communication unit assigns a priority level to the slave communication unit to deal with an occurrence of an overriding transmission.

Montano discloses a coordinator that divides a communication period (superframe) into a plurality of M superframes, M an arbitrary integer or the maximum number of devices. The coordinator then divides a divided superframe into a plurality of time slots (including GTS and MTS) based on the number of devices.

On the other hand, according to the invention defined by instant claim 32, there are a plurality of radio communication devices in the radio communication system. Each of the radio communication devices can accommodate and manage a radio communication terminal. The communication period on a wireless medium is divided into a plurality of time slots based on the number of the radio communication devices, each of the time slots being used at higher priority by each of the radio communication devices to manage an accommodated radio communication terminal (i.e., to enable the accommodated radio communication terminal to communicate).

The subject matter of claim 32 differs from the teachings of Haartsen and Montano in that there are a plurality of radio communication devices in the invention defined by new claim 32, while there is only one master communication unit or coordinator in the systems of Haartsen

and Montano. That means the target architecture is quite different between the invention defined by new claim 32 and the systems of Haartsen and Montano.

The difference regarding the architecture leads to a difference of operation. Here, it is assumed that Haartsen and/or Montano would be applied to a system including a plurality of radio communication devices. That is, it is assumed that there would be a plurality of master communication units or coordinators. In this case, a master communication unit or coordinator (so-called "meta-level master communication unit" or "meta-level coordinator") must be further placed for managing a plurality of master communication units or coordinators from an upper view of the system including a plurality of master communication units or coordinators.

On the other hand, there is no coordinator (so-called "meta-level master communication unit" or "meta-level coordinator") for managing a plurality of radio communication devices in the invention defined by claim 32. In the invention defined by claim 32, each of the radio communication devices independently detects the other radio communication devices, independently divides the communication period into a plurality of time slots based on the other radio communication devices, and sets a specific time slot as a time slot which can be used at higher priority.

As described above, Haartsen and Montano differ from the invention defined by claim 32 in architecture, operation and objective. Even if Haartsen and Montano were to be modified so as to achieve the objective of the claimed invention, the instant claimed invention still patentably distinguishes from such modified Haartsen and Montano in terms of system or device architecture.

Accordingly, the Applicants submit that the teachings of Haartsen and Montano, considered individually or in combination, do not anticipate or render obvious the subject matter defined by new claim 32. Independent claim 41 similarly recites the above-mentioned subject matter distinguishing method claim 32 from the applied references, but with respect to an apparatus. Therefore, allowance of claims 32 and 41 and all claims dependent therefrom is warranted.

In view of the above, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

If any issues remain which may best be resolved through a telephone communication, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned at the local Washington, D.C. telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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JEL/DWW/att

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